

SCHOOL MILK CARTON RECYCLING: EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

Yes, it's true! Whether your trash/recycling hauler is Waste Management , Veolia or John's Disposal, school milk cartons & juice boxes are now recyclable, mixed right in with recyclable bottles & cans! It's easy! Here are 3 simple steps:

1. **LEAVE 'EM EMPTY:** A bucket should be available for students to empty any leftover milk.
2. **LEAVE 'EM OPEN:** The carton should be left open and thrown into a collection container.
3. **LEAVE 'EM LOOSE:** Ideally, cartons should be debagged & dumped loose into the outdoor cart or dumpster provided by your hauler. Or, if they are bagged, the bag should be left open to allow for further drying.

Milk Carton Q. & A.:

Q. Okay, you said "empty", but what about rinsing? Don't they have to be rinsed?

A. The most important thing about this process is that the carton should be as dry as possible, regardless of the type of liquid. That's why it is so important that the collected cartons aren't closed up in a plastic bag where the liquid causes deterioration of the paper. Once the paper starts breaking down, it is no longer fit for recycling. The better job a student does of emptying, the easier the carton will be able to dry on its own. Offering a bucket of water for rinsing is your preference. Of course, encouraging students to finish their milk is an important message as well!

Q. I've heard some schools use drying racks for students to hang their cartons upside down after emptying. Do you recommend doing so?

A. That is an optional second step to allow for further drainage, and our Green Schools program can assist with providing appropriate equipment to do so if you desire; however, it's not a requirement. Encouraging students with a "drain the last drop" message can provide adequate drainage without the extra steps involved.

Q. The carton is made of paper, so why do the cartons go in our bottle/can recycling cart instead of our paper/cardboard dumpster?

A. Cartons are easier to handle on a sort line at a recycling facility with other containers. If you have a single-sort collection system through your hauler where all recyclables—whether paper, bottles or cans—are mixed together, then they simply get commingled together along with everything else.

Q. What about straws? We're already emptying cartons to keep liquids out of the trash, but sometimes the straws end up in the rinse bucket.

A. Since straws are not included in recycling and no one wants to pull them out of the discarded milk, the Carton Council has shared a variety of creative ways that some custodians use to deal with straws. It's always a good idea to have an adult monitor the emptying process at the beginning of a new program until students have established good habits, too. Posters, recycling staff assistance and tips on straws are available to help establish & promote your milk carton recycling program. *(See photos on page 2)*

For more information, call: 262-896-8317.

These photos are the emptying devices that a couple of creative custodians came up with to assist in emptying the milk out of the cartons. The first is a metal trash can lid that has holes drilled into it. The lid is then inverted into a standard 33-gallon plastic trash can. Students empty the liquids through the lid, which catches any straws, as well as any cartons that accidentally fall in. The smaller bucket is a 5-gallon bucket lined with a reusable paint strainer. Again, the strainer catches any straws.—*Debbi Dodson, Carton Council*

